

## ***The 5 Levels of Leadership: Proven steps to maximize your potential***

John C. Maxwell, (2011), New York, NY: Center Street.

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**John Maxwell's *The 5 Levels of Leadership* is a practical guide to leadership in any context. Although Maxwell often dips back into his experiences as a church leader in order to provide examples, his principles are applicable in most leadership situations; whether in the educational arena, corporate world, or religious sphere.**

The five levels of leadership are so logical and self-explanatory that I was asking, "Why didn't I think of that?" However, the effort required to move from one level to another is far from simple. First, the kind of leadership that comes with position (or rights) where people follow you because they have to. Second, the kind of leadership that comes from permission (or relationships) where people follow you because they want to. Third, the kind of leadership that comes with production (or results) where people follow because of what you have done for the organisation. Fourth, the kind of leadership that comes with people development (or reproduction) where people follow because of what you have done for them. And fifth, the pinnacle of leadership (or respect) where people follow because of who you are and what you represent.

I found two sections of the book worth the price of the whole book. Maxwell's "Insights into the 5 Levels of Leadership" (pp. 11–20) are helpful to anyone leading or aspiring to lead. Here, you will discover that leaders don't leave one level behind for another; that not everyone will see a leader as being on the same level; that leaders on the highest levels will find it easiest to lead; that the higher the level, the harder it is to rise to another level; that slipping back down

levels is easier than going up; and that the levels cannot be climbed alone. Put bluntly, leadership development is hard work! So, why not just relax and stay where you are? In fact, for a leader to fail to grow limits the potential for her/his organisation and people to grow.

If wanting to know what your own level of leadership is, then Maxwell's chapter on "Leadership Assessment" (pp. 21–35) will provide some enabling tools.. The first step involves a self-assessment instrument; the second, an instrument that provides insight into your interactions with those who report directly to you; the third, an instrument that allows an assessment by each of your team members; and fourth, a brief guide to putting the whole profile together. It is obvious that the instruments are not scientifically designed and that they will only provide genuine insight into your own leadership style and level if responded to honestly. But, perhaps honesty—in regard to oneself and in relationship with one's team members—is one of the real keys to successful and development leadership.

This book should not be the only one you should read on leadership. You will also want to delve into authors who will provide specific assistance in areas such as dealing with conflict resolution, strategic planning, and time-management skills. But, even so, Maxwell provides simple (but not simplistic) principles for the leadership journey. Do his principles cohere with Jesus' maxim, "If anyone wants to be first, he must be the very last, and the servant of all" (Mark 9:35, NIV)? Well, you're going to have to read the book and decide for yourself. [TEACH](#)

